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Pulpit

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Preaching

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FOUNDATIONS

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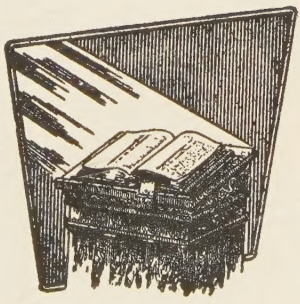

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

The October themes will be "The Lord's Treasury," sermons on stewardship, and "Modern Pilgrims Give Thanks," sermons for Thanksgiving Sunday. The November theme will be "The Deeper Meanings of Christmas." The December topics will be "Our Lord's Parables" and "Month of Beginnings," sermons for New Year's Sunday.

BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

A Guide to the Parables of Jesus by Hillyer H. Straton is a homiletically stimulating presentation of an old theme. Yet here is a freshness in interpretation and application which will aid any reader to a re-thinking of these Gospel stories in terms of their present-day values. An introductory chapter discusses the parables in general terms, and a concluding chapter offers helpful ideas for sermons on the parables. (Eerdmans, 198 pp., $3.50)

William Barclay, who has so greatly enriched the pastor's understanding and presentation of the New Testament, is the author of **The Mind of Paul,** a book of considerable stature and significance. One by one, the great Pauline theological concepts are presented, analyzed, and evaluated in ways which make the Apostle's thinking both clear and fascinating. This book will be useful for both pastors and laymen. (Harper & Brother, 256 pp., $3.50)

A revised and enlarged edition of Paul E. Johnson's **Psychology of Rel-**

(Please turn to page 20)

WORTH QUOTING

E. PAUL HOVEY
The Federated Churches
Lewiston, Idaho

What greater glory can come t a man, what more beautiful crown than the affection of neighbors, th expression of their esteem, and th assurance that one's citizenship ha been useful? Adolph Och

* * *

To every man, regardless of hi birth, his shining, golden opportun ity, to every man the right to live, t work to be himself and to becom whatever things his manhood an his vision can combine to make--thi seeker, is the promise of America.

Thomas Wolfe

* * *

Duty: what the average man look forward to with distaste, does wit reluctance, and boasts about foreve after.

* * *

A minister has been described a a mild-mannered man who talks t mild-mannered people to make the more mild-mannered.

Silas G. Kessler

* * *

Marriages fail for at least thes four reasons: (1) Insufficient know edge of one another before the ma riage. In my experience, this accoun for 90% of the marriagee failures. (Inability to face the challenge of ma ure living. Marriage is a serious voc tion and it is not child play. T many "children" get married — man of them, over twenty years old. (

(Please turn to page 31)

Pulpit Preaching

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JOHN PITTS
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Building On Spiritual Foundations

OD DOES GUIDE US

John Pitts, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Irk, Nassau, Bahamas

For this God is our God for ever and eve; He will be our guide even unto death. Psalm 48:14

In this triumphant affirmation of tth the Psalmist speaks of God's idance of His people, and in doing he strikes an intensely human note, ich finds an echoing response in ery heart. That we need the guidce of a wisdom higher than our n is a fact that we all sometime alize. Life, for every one of us, is untrodden way. "Ye have not passthis way hitherto" is an old word itten over the portals of every ening day. The road we are called travel is fresh and unfamiliar. We ve to learn from experience; and perience is a hard task-master as ll as an efficient teacher. Decisions ve to be made, pathways chosen, urses determined upon, roads tak. Any one may have far-reaching ects upon both our immediate conct and our subsequent career. ten we are compelled to hesitate d vacillate as we try to make up r minds; and often we cannot help mbling and falling when we atnpt to go on. A man does not have travel very far along the windingad of mature experience in order discover how much he stands in ed of the "Kindly Light" to lead n through the mist, and of the ward Voice which says: "This is e way; walk ye in it."

I

Two illustrations of the realization this need for the guidance of the gher Wisdom come to mind, one m ancient literature and one from dern. The former is the beautiful story Eliezer as told in the first book in the Bible, a story which has been well described as "one of the sweetes idylls ever penned." Eliezer was Abm's faithful old steward who had be in the family for very many yrs. Abram himself was an old man with a sense of the uncertainty of life pressing heavily on his mind. Bere passing from this world he was xious to see his son Isaac married d settled down in life and, in accordce with primitive custom, the fathe is head of the house took the matte in hand. Two fixed principles gov ned his attitude and action. One w s that Isaac was to marry within the rcle of the enlarged family; to bome "unequally yoked together" wh a pagan woman who had not the ar of God in her heart was unthinkble to the old patriarch. The other w that Isaac himself was not to leave anaan in order to visit the other mbers of the family in far-away Ha, where alone a suitable wife mht be found; Canaan was the "lan of promise" and the old man fear that if his son once left home he ight never want to return. So Elier, the tried and trusted retainer, w commissioned to go to Haran, the me of Abram's brother, to seek a we for his young master. What a delte task to perform!

It was a dicult mission to fulfil satisfactorily, d the faithful old steward was pplexed. But the narrative gives us a revealing glimpse into the mind Eliezer as he took

his remarkable journey. The old man, trained in the piety and faith of Abram's household, knew that he could not, left to the devices of his own heart, bring his strange quest to a successful issue. And so we are treated to the spectacle of Eliezer throwing himself upon the directing providence of God, and we are allowed to overhear him in prayer, asking for the leading of the "Kindly Light." "O Lord God of my master Abram, I pray Thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abram," he prayed. That is as good an illustration as one can find in the Old Testament of man's realization of the need of Divine direction in the discharge of duty.

The illustration from modern literature is taken from the life of the great German poet-philosopher, Goethe, who has been described as "the most cultured man of the nineteenth century." His biographer tells of that memorable day when the future writer tried to determine his career. He was wandering dreamily and lazily along the banks of the river Lahn. It was a beautiful day and the scene was glorious. For a longime he had been haunted by the desire to become a painter, and the sceneof loveliness which met his eye madthe ambition to devote his life to a seem more imperious than ever. Hfelt it incumbent upon himself to dide once and for all, but how could decide without some guidepost tooint the way? At last he resolved ton a gamble, and the test he deced upon was curious. Taking his pket-knife into his hand, he flung iinto the rushing waters of the rir, having previously decided thatf he saw the knife fall he was to come an artist, but that if the sinkir knife was concealed by the trees I was to give up the idea. No Delpc orade could ever have been morambiguous than the answers which one. The willows concealed the sinng knife; but where it fell the wers splashed up like a fountain and e knife was distinctly visible. Such an indefinite answer left him still a prey to doubt and perplexity. There are times in our experience when we are just as puzzled and troubled about what to do as were Eliezer on the road to Harar and Goethe by the banks of the Lahn. Alternatives in conduct present themselves to us, and we find it difficult to decide which road to take. We are made to realize that to choose the right path and to do the right thing depends on factors beyond the range of our own ingenuity, however experienced, clever and long-sighted we may think ourselves to be.

II

On this point there can be no fundamental divergence of opinion. Both the man who believes in God and the man who does not really believe in God — though he may loudly protest that he is no atheist — feel at times their need of guidance. But there is a very marked difference in the way in which each thinks of this guidance and in the ways in which each seeks it. The one believes in the guidance of chance circumstance; any stray happening, merely because it is a stray happening, may be regarded as pointing the way. The other believes in the guidance of God, which may come in and through circumstance, as well as through the "Voice that speaks within" and through the "fellowship of kindred minds." To him there is no such thing as chance circumstance; and the stray happening is no longer stray when it is an element in the experience of the man whose whole life is completely devoted to knowing and doing the will of God. The unbeliever may come to the parting of the ways in his life and may be prepared to determine his choice by means of a gamble, ready to risk everything "on one game of pitch and toss" as it were; and the young Goethe flinging his pocket-knife into the rushing river has its counterpart today in the strange devices resorted to by those shallow people who believe in luck. The

nristian, on the other hand, finds a odel and an inspiration in the shin- g example of Abram's old servant. ne guidance he asks for is Divine idance, since that is the only guid- ce which can be relied upon with shakable confidence. In the most rplexing experiences of his life, and "the trivial round, the common sk" as well, there is open to him e way of prayerful dependence oon that Wisdom which sees the d from the beginning and that resight which knows the way we ke.

Of course, there are people who do t hear the name of Christ and who not bother themselves about Di- ne guidance, yet who nevertheless ould not yield up their lives to the termination of chance circum- ance, and who certainly would nev- dream of listening to the "old wiv- tale" of the spiritualist's seance nd the fortune-teller's kiosk. When ey are faced with the necessity of aking decisions they rely on a prud- nt calculation of possibilities; or they ave to resort to the counsel of trust- friends. And these helps are not be despised. But again there is a fference between the attitude of e astute and cautious man of the orld and the genuine believer in od. For the Christian Divine guid- nce does not mean a cheap and sy way of getting through life; it not a device of laziness to save him e trouble of thinking and planning, learning from experience, of listen- g to the voice of the Christian fel- wship. When faced with alterna- ves in conduct and feeling perplex- d as to the pathway to be taken, the eliever in Christ must try to "size up e situation" which confronts him; e must seek the counsel of those pon whose judgment he feels he an rely. But his attitude is not lentical with that of the man who concerned only with doing the best r himself and for those who depend n his personal success. The Christ- an believes that direction can come through his own reason; that is why he, too, must calculate the possibilities of a perplexing situation. He also believes that it can come through fellowship and friendship of the right sort; that is one of the values he finds in Church membership. But the Christian should never be concerned merely with doing the best for himself. In so far as he is Christian he will, in every situation, seek to understand and express the mind of Christ. It will be Divine guidance that he asks for, since it is the Divine will that he seeks to know and do. His prayer is:

Through each perplexing path of life
Our wandering footsteps guide.

But he offers that prayer, not because he wants to escape trouble and struggle, foresight and thoughtfulness, but because he wants to be sure that in all his actions he is living in line with the will of God. He throws himself upon the Divine guidance because it is the Divine life that he seeks to live and the Divine will that he seeks to do.

II.

Such Divine guidance is given to those who seek it because they are seeking "first the kingdom of God." That is the testimony of the devout heart in every generation. That is the meaning of a good deal of Christian experience. To deny the reality and the validity of such guidance is to put the foolscap on the centuries; it is to turn the most cherished convictions of the best men and women the world has known into vain and empty delusions. Of course, it is quite possible to bring what the philosopher calls "a priori" objections against the belief that God does guide His people. Modern science has given us an imagination-shatering picture of the terrifying vastness of the universe in which we live. The geologist, from his careful examination of the rocks, fossils and strata of the earth, suggests that the universe must be at least two billion years old. The

astronomer sweeps the heavens with his mighty telescope and tells us that there are as many stars in the firmament as there are grains of sand upon all the sea-shores of the world. What is this little world of ours, this "fifth-rate planet of a tenth-rate sun," lost as it is amidst this unimaginable space? What are these little lives of ours against this vast background of unimaginable time? Our education, our businesses, our sports, our arts and crafts, our science and philosophy, our politics, even our wars

What is it all but the murmur of gnats
In the gleam of a million million suns?

Does God, the All-Powerful and the All-Wise, trouble Himself about such midges as we are? Is it not a glaring example of what has been described as "swagger religion" to believe that He guides us in our little affairs? Thus the modern scientific world-view insinuates into our minds devastating doubts as to the Divine direction of our lives.

But the last word on this matter is not with scientific construction, but with religious experience; and that last word is spoken with absolute certainty and without any ambiguity. The lives of good men and women in every age provide us with unimpeachable witness to the reality of Divine guidance. In their own experience they saw undeniable evidence of the guiding hand of God. The events and circumstances of their lives gave them ample proofs that in times of crisis they were being directed by a wisdom higher than their own, though sometimes it was not until they looked back upon their experience that they saw the guidance. Modern science, whatever its view of the universe, cannot write that off. Neither can the vastness of space, nor the everness of time, make impossible God's concern for the proper conduct of human affairs. Space and time, however vast, are measurable quantities. We can say of a given distance that it is so far, and of a given epoch that it is so long. But quantity is not the only thing in this universe. Quality is also a characteristic of the universe; and quality cannot be measured by the yard-stick or the chronometer of science. The astronomer can compute exactly the distance between the sun and the earth, but he cannot measure a mother's love for her child. The geologist can judge the length of time of a geological epoch, but he cannot measure the heights of self-sacrifice to which human nature can rise. Look at that lad climbing the mountain. How small he appears on the bosom of that giant of earth and rock. But the lad is greater than the mountain, for he can make conscious response to his environment and the forces that play upon his life. See that man yonder taking a walk under the starlit heavens, and feeling something of that awe and wonder about which Immanuel Kant spoke. As far as size is concerned there is no comparison between the man and the smallest of the heavenly bodies. Yet the man is greater than the stars, for he can think about them and be filled with wonder at the sight of them. Modern science may seem to show the utter insignificance of man, but the scientist himself is greater than any of the things he studies with such meticulous care. Man is more than a scientist; he is the child of God. And the child of God can rightly claim the guidance of his heavenly Father.

IV

That, I repeat, is the witness of centuries of religious experience. Whatever the circumstances of their lives those who have been concerned to know and do the will of God have felt the guiding hand of God upon them. We have given two illustrations of the need of guidance, one from ancient and one from modern literature. Let us give two illustrations of the certainty of guidance, again one from ancient and one from modern literature. The first is taken from

e New Testament. It is the story Paul's second great missionary urney. The Apostle started out from rian Antioch in order to preach the ospel in the thickly populated dis- cts of Asia Minor. But that journey as largely a silent one. Something as holding Paul back from preach- g, yet was driving him forward ong a road that he had never plan- d for himself. He had what the akers call "a stop in the mind." e are told by the author of the ts that the Apostle was "forbidden the Holy Ghost to preach the rd" and that "the Spirit suffered m not." How amazing it seems! here was this burning, ardent, flam- g missionary of the Cross anxious preach the Gospel at Ephesus, in thinia, and elsewhere, yet feeling l the time that it was not God's ill that he should do so. Step by p he was led onward until he came Troas on the shores of Hellespont, here he met Luke, through whom e came to Europe. The outcome of aul's implicit obedience to that mys- , inward restraint and constraint as the evangelization of the West- n world. He crossed the narrow retch of water separating Asia from urope and came to Philippi and hessalonica, Corinth and Athens; d thus he shifted the balance of wer and of interest from east to est and made possible the rise of odern Europe and America.

The second illustration is taken om Stopford Brooke's "Life and Let- rs of F. W. Robertson," the great righton preacher, who, although he ied at the early ago of thirty-seven, shered in a new era of religious life d thought. Robertson had a soldier ther and grandfather and three sol- er brothers, and he wanted to fol- w the family tradition. He applied r a commission in the Dragoon uards, but there was some delay at e War Office. Meanwhile, acting pon the advice of his father and a iend, he matriculated at Cambridge ith a view to becoming a Church of England clergyman. Five days later the commission arrived; and although he was strongly inclined to accept it, be accepted his father's judgment that the circumstances were divinely directed, and he thereupon turned his back on the army and his face toward the Church. Robertson was impressed by the whole affair, since everything seemed to turn on trivialities. Amongst his papers was found a note referring to his perplexity: "If I had not met a certain person I should not have changed my profession; if I had not known a certain lady I should not probably have met this person; if that lady had not had a delicate daughter who was disturbed by the barking of my dog, if my dog had not barked that night, I should now have been in the Dragoons or fertilizing the soil of India." And at the end of his note he throws out this challenge: "Who can say that these things were not ordered?" The answer is, no one who knows anything of the life and influence of this great preacher and great man. True, he himself during his short ministry was often afflicted with spiritual gloom which made him think he had made a mistake in entering the ministry and that he ought to have been a soldier. He was a lonely man, and much misunderstood. Loneliness and misunderstanding h a v e invariably been the lot of the pioneer in the realm of thought. And more often than not he thought of his ministry in terms of utter failure. But not those of us who read those wonderful sermons of his so up-to-date, so deeply spiritual, so profoundly moving in thought and feeling, though it is a century ago since they were preached. Frederick William Robertson was one of God's finest gifts to the Church during the nineteenth century, but if it had not been for the leading of the "Kindly Light," shining through trivial circumstance, the British Army would have gained a dashing young subaltern, but the Church of Christ would have lost one

of its finest and greatest captains. And who can measure what that would have meant for the Church and the world?

Such guidance is available for all those who are genuinely seeking to know and to do the will of God. That is to say, it is available for us. Alas, that we so often miss it, and indeed that we so often do not even concern ourselves with it. Henry Drummond suggests that Christians may be roughly divided into two classes. There are those who have God's will in their character; otherwise, they would have no true claim to be called Christians. Then there are those who have God's will in their career as well as in their characters. They are, however, much the smaller class. At the same time they are much the more effective type of Christian. Those who have God's will only in their characters "are really outside a great part of God's will altogether. They understand the universal part, they are moulded by it, and their lives as lives are in some sense noble and true. But they miss the private part, the secret whispering of God in the ear, the constant message from heaven to earth."

Is that our case? Are we in this class of Christians? Or are we amongst those who experience Divine guidance because we know the will of God in the working out of our career as well as in the development of our character? We can be. There is no good for us to be outside the major part of God's will. He will lead us every step of the way if only we will take the trouble to listen to His Voice and to look for His beckoning hand. For the promise is to us, as to the people of old: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths." And when we have discovered the peace and security which come from the fulfilment of the promise in our experience we are able to make the triumphant affirmation of the Psalmist our own: "This God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our guide even unto death." Then, and then only, will we have the complete assurance that we are God's children. "For the sons of God are those who are guided by the Spirit of God."

THE HOUSE ON THE ROCK

A. E. Purviance, Palm Springs Methodist Church, Hialeah, Florida

Scripture: Matthew 7:24-29.

Christ's Sermon on the Mount has been called the greatest sermon ever preached. He spoke of many things that His followers should do and should not do and then He reached the climax with the story of the two houses, one built upon rock and one built upon sand. Of course, the important thing is not the house, but the occupants of the house. In one case they were protected from the storms and adversities of life. In the other instance they were lost when the house failed to survive the test.

I presume that it is safe for us to assume that these houses could be our homes—yours and mine—not the material structure of wood and stone but the spiritual elements which determine whether our homes stand or fall.

What is it to build a home upon a rock that will stand against the test of life?

I

The home must be built upon love and selfless interests. Christ had a great deal to say about love. He said that we are to love our neighbors. In some cases this proves rather a challenge. He also said we are to love our enemies. This is even harder. We can love those who love us, but when it comes to loving those who despise us

e are put to a real test. Paul, too, d much to say about love. If ever a man had a right to hate the world, was Paul. He suffered at the hands more individual men than perhaps y man who ever lived. His life was constant danger and he knew the ide of prisons, yet he continued to aintain all through his ministry a ve for all mankind.

But there must also be a deep-seat- love for one another in the home. rist said that from the beginning of e God made male and female and two shall become one flesh. Paul d that a man must love his children d the children must respect the me.

We are not spending nearly enough e these days in the home together a family. Sometimes we hardly see e another as we go our separate ys. We gather at the going down the sun and then take off again en evening comes, some to be in d before others return.

Three hundred boys in the seventh d eighth grades recently were ask- to submit to a two-week test. They re asked to write down each day e number of minutes they were ne with their fathers. Some wrote t they went for days without ac- lly seeing them. Others wrote that was a matter of but a few seconds day. The average time submitted the 300 boys in their early teens er the two-week period was seven l a half minutes a week! A boy and dad were alone together about seconds a day! Our own interests ve caused us to build upon the d, and many homes are weakened cause we have not had the love and nsideration for others we should ve had. The home must be built on love and selfless interests.

II

The home built upon the rock is o built around the church. There st be a genuine love for the church. ere are some who support the urch largely through a sense of ty. Others attend because it tends to help them with their business to be seen in church. But the genuine Christian attends because he loves the church and he wishes to use his time and talent in the church.

It is alarming to note that among those couples who leave the church out of their lives one out of three end up in the divorce courts. One out of three! On the other hand, it is significant to note that but three couples out of fifty who take the church into their lives get a divorce. The church does something to cement a family together and place the home on a solid foundation.

The church helps hold the family together in good days and it is the first to extend loving arms when times are hard. It is there to receive us back when we take the paths of iniquity. It is the comfort for the afflicted, it baptizes us, it marries us, it buries us, and all the time in between it loves us with a genuine love that must be reciprocated. The home built upon the rock is built around the church.

III

The third thing I want to say about building our homes upon the rock concerns prayer, for prayer is essential to a firm foundation. But prayer must be more than words spoken through a sense of duty. I suspect that many of us pray daily more through a sense of duty than through a love for praying. Many are afraid not to pray. Prayer must stem from love rather than from a sense of obligation.

Real prayer can save the home — any home. There is not a home in the community — I care not how near the breaking point it may be at the present time — that prayer cannot help hold together. But the prayer must be so sincere that we are willing to follow up what we pray for. God cannot be expected to do it all for us. You may ask God to keep you safe through the night with peaceful sleep, but if you go out and eat pickles, French fries, sauerkraut, and wieners half the night it is doubtful that your

prayer will be answered. You may ask God for a home built upon the rock, but unless you do your part to answer the prayer it may cave in from having been built upon the sand.

A hundred years ago, according to Dr. Peale, a man in New York City by the name of Lanthier got off the horse car and headed as usual for his office down Fulton Street. It was a dark period. Depression had hit. Businesses were closing everywhere. Wages were down and thousands were walking the streets. This man Lanthier was worried. He was just a clerk on Fulton Street. He was a man of prayer. That day Lanthier did something that was to change the destiny of our nation. He wrote notes to business acquaintances telling them that at noon each day in a little office on Fulton Street there would be a brief prayer meeting. The idea caught fire.

A similar meeting was begun on Wall Street, Broadway, and Williams Street. Boston caught the impact of it; so did Philadelphia, Denver, the Pacific Coast, and the South. Prayer groups for the sake of the nation sprang up everywhere. Within two years' time, a million persons joined the churches across the land. A religious revival brought an upsurge in business, and a new wave of prosperity was at hand. And it all started because one man believed in the power of prayer and expressed a real love for it.

Many homes today are having rough sledding. Without prayer we are risking marital rifts that may lead to a breaking point, and often do! Prayer, combined with a family altar, enables us to build our homes upon the rock.

IV

There is a fourth thing that will help us build a house upon a rock. Wherever he goes each member of the home must radiate the spirit of Christ. If you come out of a home that is built upon a rock you are not going to be seen in a tavern or a bar. Radiate the spirit of a Christian home at work, school, or play! The Bible says, "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also." The Christian home needs to be the center of our treasure as we go forth to radiate Christ.

I read a story some time ago about a judge in San Francisco who died at the age of 91. Everyone called him Uncle Matt. Hundreds of baskets of flowers were sent by friends from all over the city, but the finest of them all came from a Pat Murphy, who was not known to the family. So they decided to look up this man and see who he was. He turned out to be a wizened little Irishman in a shiny blue suit and without any money. They asked him about his gorgeous floral arrangement and why had he done it. He said: "I'm a street sweeper. I clean the streets of the city. For 20 years I used to wait for the judge at the corner of Fifth and Howard and walk the long block with him me sweeping as we walked. All my life I've been nothing but Pat to every Tom, Dick, and Harry that came along. No one respected me no one noticed me. But the judge – he always called me 'Mr. Murphy.' Comin' from a great man like the judge, it did something for me and I'll never forget it as long as I live." Here, then, is the story of a man who lived in a Christian home and came out of it to touch with love his friend who swept the streets. We need more of that.

The Master stands at the door and knocks today. Would you be ashamed to let Him in? Are there certain things you would have to hide, or is your home ready for Him right now? Is the home of which you are a part built upon the solid rock?

Many a family has been saved by letting God come into the home and establishing it upon His principles of love, love for the church, prayer, and a radiance we take with us wherever we go. Every husband could be

tter husband. Every wife could be better wife. America needs homes at are built upon the solid rock. If e have enough Christian homes and enough Christian people within them, our nation will never be destroyed by the enemy within or without.

HAT'S THE GOSPEL!

Maxie D. Dunnam, Trinity Methodist Church, Gulfport, Mississippi

For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith. Romans 1:16

In the section of Mississippi of my uth there was a phrase which was part of almost all native speech. It as used to affirm the validity of natever was being said. If an indiidual desired to impress upon his mpanion in conversation the truth whatever he was saying, he would d, "Now, that's the gospel."

When the phrase was coined it ust have been very sharp and conncing. However, it became so comon and was used with so little ought that it soon lost its meaning. ecause of careless use it became dinary and dull. What a shame!

The apostles of the Early Church ight have added this phrase to their essages. When they proclaimed hrist, the Cross, and the Resurrecon, they did so with the certain owledge that they were proclaimg the Gospel. What New Testament udents call the "Kerygma" is the oclamation that Christ came from od, humbled Himself as man, beme obedient to the Cross, was raisl by God, and is exalted above all mes — and this for the purpose of ving mankind. To this message they uld have added with a piercing ng, "That's the gospel."

In this message let us think about hat we would say if we were going add with sincerity and convincing wer, "that's the gospel." If we are speak, as we must, to the ignorant ho have never heard about Christ, hat will we tell them in order that ey might understand? Or if we are tempting to explain Christianity to e many learned pagans of our own ciety, how will we do it? What is the crux of what Christianity has to say to all people? To what truths might we add, "That's the gospel?"

Paul gave a very terse and sagacious definition of the Gospel in his introduction to the Romans: "I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith." The Gospel then, he says, is the power of God to save men who will accept it. To improve upon that definition would indeed be a formidable task.

"That's the gospel" — the power of God to save men who will accept it.

We begin our message then with the certainty that every man is a sinner.

Man, belonging to the world of nature, lives in a world of sin and is himself a sinner. Because of our pride, this is difficult, yes, almost impossible for us to accept. But with honest probing and introspection it is hardly difficult to understand. A good look at life causes us to soon admit that something is wrong. Life is not as it should be. There is a disharmony in man and a dissonance that convinces of a discrepency between man as he is and man as he should be.

When one contemplates this stark fact one may recall the pensive and plaintive utterance of thousands of years ago. In the Parable of the Vineyard the prophet Isaiah represents God speaking of His people thus:

> Let me sing for my beloved
> A love song concerning his vineyard:
> My well-beloved had a vineyard

In a very fruitful hill.
And he digged it, and cleared it of stones,
And planted it with choice vines . . .
And he looked for it to yield grapes,
And it brought forth wild grapes.

Then he adds this lamentation:

What more was there to do for my vineyard,
That I have not done for it?
When I looked that it should bring forth grapes,
Why did it yield wild grapes? (Isa. 5:1-4)

Wild grapes, indeed! What is the cause? Some oversight or failure on the part of God? Some botch or blunder in creation? Ah, no! God is not the blame; man is. Yet, whatever our explanation, the fact is still the same: wild grapes! We consider man, and though there is a blanket covering-up on the part of most of us, still, when we are sincere, we are overwhelmed by our failures. Though the choicest vines are planted, the wild grapes grow. Inevitably we are confronted with the certainty that every man is a sinner.

II

"That's the gospel!" But it isn't the whole gospel. We do not believe as did Huw in **How Green Was My Valley,** "That the life of man is merely scrawled on Time with little thought, little care, and no sense of design." We believe that every man is a sinner, but we must not believe that he is in such a grip of sin and so blighted in nature that his case is hopeless.

Apropos of this truth is an old story about a famous picture in which an artist sought to depict that great interview between Faust and Satan. You will remember that Faust gambled for his soul, and the artist portrays the two sitting at a chessboard, the devil on one side and Faust on the other. The devil is leering with glee because he thinks he has Faust at his mercy and completely beaten. The situation appears to be a checkmate. Faust shrinks and crumbles. The devil gloats. One day, the story goes, a master chess player was studying it, and then, to the surprise of everybody in the art gallery, he shouted: "It's a lie! The king and the knight have a move!"

Is this not so with man? Sin seems to have us. But no! Christ is the King. We are His knights. There is another move. For as assuredly as we are sinners "there persists in every man – a scrap of soul." This is the phrase Whittaker Chambers uses when he describes the inner struggle of a man committed to the faith of communism when that man is convincingly confronted by the fact of God. This "scrap of soul" responds to Something beyond the Almighty Man and Almighty Mind of communism. It responds to God. We may say our words about man, yet Wordsworth is still right:

There's not a man
That lives, who hath not known his godlike hours.

III

We are sinners, but as creatures of God we have a "scrap of soul" which responds to the good. Thus we readily see that we are children of need. A great step on the road to a vital personal, Christian experience is a profound sense of need. "That's the gospel."

We have built our dreams on the sandy foundations of our creatureliness only to see them toppled by the first strong wind of fate. We have planted our seeds of hope in the fallow soil of our own strength only to find it barren and unproductive. We soon discover that within our own power we spend our lives for naught. We are creatures of need. This is the mark of our "status in the scale of existence."

But it is not a sign of our weakness to be children of need. If the need was only for food, clothing and shelter, it might well be so. To be sure

ere are the primary physical needs man. But the quality needs are nat separate man from the lower imals. His curiosity sends him into ter space in quest of knowledge the unknown. His creative mind ans and his skillful hands build me- anical devices that are almost hu- an in their operation. Yet the need at identifies man in his true nature a soul-need such as Alfred Noyes iced when he said:

I am full-fed
And yet I hunger.
Who set this fiercer famine
In my maw;
Who set this deeper hunger
in my heart?

This is the deep need which is an's "badge of dignity." Gamaliel adford expressed it thus:

But my one unchanged obsession, whereso'er my feet have trod,
Is a keen, enormous, haunting, never-sated thirst for God

"That's the gospel!" We are children of need. Our need is for God.

IV

As sinners then, with an unsated irst for God, we need a Savior. arry Emerson Fosdick has remind- us that sin is a Trojan horse. We elcome it through a breach in our alls as the ancient city did, expect- t of happiness. But when it is safe ithin the walls of our lives we dis- ver that it has inside it many hostile rces we never suspected. In the ght these inimical forces creep out. hey grapple with our souls until we nd ourselves crying with Paul, What a wretched man I am! Who n save me from this doomed body?" om. 7:24, Goodspeed).

"That's the gospel." We are caught the ravages of sin and we need a avior. We must have a deliverer. he evident shortness of life makes all seem futile. The frustrations and failures which are our constant visitors stamp out our stoical courage. The all-too-evident vagrant diasters confront us daily. Life is crushing! More desperate than Noah in **The Green Pastures,** we say, "I ain' very much, but I'se all I got."

As painfully real as this may often appear, it is not the true situation. There is the power of Christ. And this is our salvation. So Paul could follow his cry of desperation with the shout of victory: "Thank God! it is done through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom. 7:25, Goodspeed).

To be sure, other saviors have offered great promises. And, doubtlessly, deliverance of a sort has been claimed. But all have been tried and found wanting. They have faded as a fad with the passing of time. Jesus remains as the one sure Savior. He conquered death. He enables us to face every situation. He can deal with every man's need. Only He delivers us from sin and fills our need for God. Is it any wonder then that a Hindu, converted to Christianity, said, "God is too great an idea for me to grasp, but when I think about Jesus, He seems to hold my universe steady?" Or consider Michael Faraday. When the light of his life was flickering and he faced the light of tomorrow's new day, some friends asked for an interview. G. Ray Jordan skillfully recalls this interview for us. "What are your speculations?" the friends inquired. "Speculations?" he answered in surprise. "Speculations! I have none! I am resting on certainties. I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day!"

We are sinners, there is within us the "scrap of soul" which responds to God. We are children of need — our need is for a Savior. We have a Savior, Christ. "That's the gospel!"

THE SONG OF THE WELL

C. Ritchie Bell, Presbyterian College, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Spring up, O Well!
Sing her back to her.
Well which Princes digged,
Nobles of the people delved her.
With the sceptre and with staves.

These words from Numbers 21:17-18 form a folk-song of early Israel and one of the oldest bits of literature in the Bible. I have quoted the translation of George Adam Smith, late principal of Aberdeen University. The poem is not a religious song in the conventional sense. It was much later in their history that the Hebrews rose to the religious consciousness that enabled them to write hymns for use in worship.

It simply gives expression to the emotion of the poet and belongs to what we call the poetry of sentiment. So bright and catchy was the song that it became popular among the common people, and men and women sang it as they toiled at the well. We must not therefore, seek in it for any profound wisdom, for it is not didactic poetry. It is a simple little lyric, beautiful in form and expressing a pretty sentiment.

It is no less welcome nor inspiring because it is not strictly religious. It springs up refreshingly, like the water of which it sings, in the midst of a dry and thirsty land. We cannot tell when the song was born, for legends grow about the origin of songs as well as about the origin of men and nations; but Hebrew tradition assigned the birth of this song to an incident in the wanderings of the Children of Israel. Tired, thirsty and depressed, they were journeying along the borders of Moab and suddenly they came upon a welcome spring of water. It was an occasion for the poet to say something. How did this well come to be there? Long ago, perhaps, the princes of the land had digged it for the benefit of the common people. Their genius and thoughtfulness were well worthy of being immortalized in verse. When the princes of Israel discovered this old well and opened it up anew for the refreshment of the thirsty band of pilgrims, with what delight the people must have hailed this new provision for their wants! We can almost sympathize with their joy, for as we toil along through the dry as dust history of the book of Numbers, it is with similar delight that we suddenly come upon this refreshing little lyric. This is the legend of its birth; and we are glad that it still revives the weary student.

I

Is not a well one of the last places where we should expect to find an Eastern poet singing? To the oriental mind the well is the symbol of abject toil and the meanest drudgery. How rare a thing is poetry in word or life amid such conditions! And yet one of the earliest singers of Israel gave us this Song of the Well: and the sweetest singer of the Hebrew race struck his highest note beside the Well of Sychar. "Jesus, therefore wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well . . . . There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water . . . . Jesus saith to her, 'God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." This is the highest poetry, sublime in its spiritual insight; and this is the profoundest truth of religion ever given to the world.

It is surely not altogether without significance that Hebrew poetry made its beginning we might almost say and reached its climax beside the well. And what does it mean? The Hebrew people stand essentially for religion. Religion carries inspiration into the monotonous routine of daily toil. Religion glorifies the common

fe of humanity and makes even a fe of drudgery radiant with beauty. his is the message of Israel singing t the well. Can we not, even in this arly Song of the Well, detect the eculiar genius of the Hebrew people o reach a religion which makes duty joy and transforms work into play? o we not learn this to be the chief inction of religion, as we see Jesus, earied with His journey, sitting on ne well and hear Him speaking His oblest truth to the drudge who came ither to draw water? It is surprising o find a poet singing at the well; ut Jesus was always doing surprising nings, and not the least surprising f His doings was the introduction nto the world of a religion that fills ne hours of labor with a holiday pirit, and enables the toiler to sing nerrily at his tasks.

II

The well-side, as I have said, is the ast place where we should expect to ind an Eastern people inspired to ing, because to the oriental mind the ell is the symbol of abject toil. We now little in our modern Western ife of the drudgery which in Eastern nds is associated with the drawing f water; for with us water is abund- nt and within easy reach. The city ousewife of today does not need to raw water from a well at all; and ven in the country the well is not eep and there are inventions to draw with. But in Eastern lands it was very ifferent. "Hewers of wood and draw- rs of water" is the phrase the Bible ses for describing the lowest class f serfs.

It is true that the Bible also speaks f the well as the gift of God, and o the inhabitants of Bible lands the ell was one of God's choicest gifts. But God's gifts, whether spiritual or naterial, are only won by man's hard oil. The more precious God's gift to umanity the more painful is the abor necessary to secure it; and the well of water, God's chiefest temporal gift to an Eastern people, cost them much sweat and weariness. Sometimes, however, the drudgery of drawing water was forgotten; and life even at the well was glorified by noble feeling, for as they toiled, they sang:

Spring up, O Well!
Sing ye back to her!
Well, which princes digged,
Nobles of the people delved her,
With their sceptres and with their staves.

This illustrates, then, the genius of our religion. It is possible for us to carry such poetic sentiment into our humdrum life. The greater part of our life is made up of laborious routine. Day after day, from morning to night, our time is taken up with the same petty details. This monotony of existence may breed staleness. Our daily work is apt to become a necessary evil, spiritless toil and sheer drudgery. We find our daily tasks exhausting rather than refreshing, and we seek refuge in literature, in art, in the cinema, in holidays; but we never suspect that our own commonplace lives are capable of yielding us inspiration. We are fools and blind. This little song reminds us that every bit of routine had its origin in genius. The things which we hold cheap in life — the fire we light, the bread we eat, the alphabet we use, the coins we handle, the clothes we wear, the tools we work with, — how thoughtlessly we regard them!

But what do they stand for? Each of these fundamental facilities of life represents some early triumph of man's spirit. With this rememberance life cannot become monotonous and empty of enthusiasm. Princes digged this well at which we daily toil. Nobles of the people delved it with their sceptres and with their staves. In the midst of the ordinary routine of our daily labor, we are in the company of geniuses of the race.

III

What a mistake to allow ourselves to degenerate into drudges at our daily tasks. How poor we are indeed,

if we cannot find in our own experiences enough to inspire and refresh us. If our own life is not self-sufficing, if we sorrowfully brood over our own conditions and fancy that the lives of other people are more blessed with richness of feeling and grandeur of vision, we have not yet learned the simplest elements of the art of living.

The religion of Jesus teaches us that the common life of common people is noble, that we may carry the spirit of poetry into the most monotonous existence, and that the life of toil need not be severed from tranquility. Jesus was born into a humble home, and his early life had no inspiring conditions that we lack. How monotonous was his labor! Day by day he worked at the carpenter's bench and filled in the hours with the routine of toil. And even when He went forth as a public teacher, He still lived in closest touch with every common office in the life about Him. How clearly His parables reveal His sympathy with actual life! What are the illustrations He uses? The common people and the ordinary events of life. As has been well said by George Adam Smith in his great sermon on this text: "Servants and masters, judges and clients, Kings and their lieutenants, the fishermen, the shepherd, the husbandman, the merchant, the delver finding treasure, the commercial traveller (for the Good Samaritan was a commercial traveller), the unemployed in the marketplace, the beggar at the gate, the publican standing afar off — see how he lived all these lives of common men, glorifying them, and speaking from their heart to our heart."

The life of Jesus was just as full of routine, monotony and drudgery, as are our lives; but it was also full of poetry, the beauty of noble feeling, and an inspiring and elevating idealism. Jesus was no drudge. He was not even a toiler at His tasks. He was a worker, it is true; "my Father worketh hitherto and I work." But even His work, like the work of nature, was done with the unconscious ease and freedom of the Master Artist. We call those verses from the Sermon on the the Mount, Matthew 6:19-34, the holiday-thoughts of our Lord, and so they are. They reveal how truly He had penetrated to the heart of nature and how free He was from carping care and wearing anxiety. But all His words express holiday-thoughts. His whole life was one of repose in action. We cannot think of nature as a drudge, as we see her day after day, year after year, go about the same old tasks. She toils not; when most at work she seems to be at play. Such an artist of life was Jesus who had caught the secret of nature, and so are they who have learned from Him the art of living.

IV

Jesus appointed very few forms for the expression of the spirit of His religion, but this seems to be the significance of the sacrament which in all ages has occupied the central place in the Christian ritual. The symbols are bread and wine, and the message is: "Eat and drink in remembrance of me." Bread and wine! The simplest food and the fundamental necessities of every day. Eating and drinking are the commonest acts of life. But these things and these doings are sacramental, symbolic and poetic. Before every deed we can then hear these words, "This do in remembrance of me." And the remembrance of Jesus glorifies the commonplace and makes drudgery divine. This remembrance is the poetry of the Christian life. To the mason at his humble toil, Jesus says, "Raise the stone and there am I," and to the carpenter, "Cleave the wood and there may I be found." The life of routine is thus shot through with noble sentiment. "The trivial round, the common task, will furnish all we ought to ask." With the ever-present memory of Christ, life cannot become flat, stale, or unprofitable. Like those drawers of water at the Eastern well, we too may have our song to sing which will lighten toil and transform

ne monotony of duty into a perenial joy.

E. R. Sill, a young American poet f great promise, who was prematurev taken from his earthly tasks, left s the secret of the victory over mootony in these beautiful lines:

Forenoon and afternoon and night, — Forenoon,
And afternoon, and night, —
Forenoon, and — what!
The empty song repeats itself.
No more?
Yea, that is Life: make this forenoon sublime,
This afternoon a psalm, this night a prayer,
And Time is conquered, and thy crown is won.

HEN THE MAJORITY IS WRONG

G. Todd Roberts, First Baptist Church, Terre Haute, Indiana

Scripture: Acts 16:16-24

A great problem facing the believng Christian today is this: how can be a Christian when all of the presures of life are forcing me to perorm unchristian acts? How can I and up for what is right in the face f the wrong that pushes me here nd there? The crowd, my friends nd my associates expect me to do hings that I know are wrong, unhristian and unethical. In the midst f this, how can I live the Christian ife?

I

This difficulty has always been prent for the Christian and must be nswered by each individual accordng to his situation in life. Paul and ilas were constantly threatened by his problem. On one occasion they ere brought before the magistrates, nd their accusers presented their ase. Then, we are told, "the crowd oined in attacking them." The crowd as not interested in the truth and ney were not concerned with the al issue, but they "joined in attackng them."

Crowds are like that, and those ho follow the crowd are quickly lost it. Said Gustave Lebon, "The indiiduals in a crowd, by their numbers, equire a feeling of power which givs rein to instincts that, alone, they ould have been forced to keep in heck." The observation made by ord Chesterfield in 1748 is certainly an everlasting truth: "Observe any meetings of people, and you will always find their eagerness and impetuosity rise or fall in proportion to their numbers: when the numbers are very large, all sense and reason seem to subside, and one sudden frenzy to seize on all, even the coolest of them."

It is so easy to go along with the crowd and to do what we feel the crowd wants us to do. If the crowd does something, then we feel that we must follow with them or else people will think that we are not sociable, or that we are maladjusted.

At the service club it is so easy to do what everyone else is doing, regardless of whether it is right or wrong. We go along with the crowd, because we are afraid to stand up for what is right for fear of what others might think of us or for fear of "bucking the crowd." Or at the women's club we feel that we will gain much attention if we can just tell a slanderous piece of gossip, regardless of how much we may hurt some individual. Or at school it is so easy to do what everyone else is doing and accept the latest fads of dishonesty or the breaking of moral laws. Or, at the office it is such a simple matter to accept the standard business procedures, regardless of the dishonesty involved or of the damage which might be done to an individual.

Have we forgotten Jesus Christ in

our going along with the crowd? Have we failed to stand up for Him, even after we have sung. "Stand up, stand up for Jesus"?

II

Let us look at some of the reasons why we feel that we must follow the crowd. First, there is the usual reply, "We follow the crowd so that we won't lose our friends." This is a very superficial response, but it does reflect in the lives of many. Many come to church service on Sunday so as not to lose their friends. Second, there is the answer that I have to do what the rest are doing, or I will lose my very important business contacts. Which is more important, standing up for Christ or keeping your business contacts? Losing your own soul, or gaining the whole world? Which is more important, property or persons?

Finally, there is the honest answer that we go along with the crowd because it is the easiest way. Robert Service wrote:

> It's easy to fight when everything's right,
> And you're mad with the thrill and the glory;
> It's a different song when everything's wrong.
> When its ten to one, and the hope is gone.

When you are the one, it is hard to stand up for Christ and His kingdom, and it is so simple to follow the line of least resistance, to follow the majority. But when the majority is wrong, where does that leave you?

Joseph of Arimathea is the Biblical personality who is remembered because he had the courage to go to Pilate and ask for the body of Jesus that He might receive a decent burial. But that is only part of the story. Joseph was also a secret disciple of the Master, but he did not want his close associates to know of this. Furthermore, Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin, the very council that tried Jesus. Had Joseph the courage, he could have stood up in the council and pleaded the case for the Man from Galilee, but he didn't. He remained silent, perhaps even choosing not to attend this important meeting. History has proven that the council was wrong, but where does this leave Joseph? Condemned with the council because he failed to stand up for Christ when He needed Joseph most. When the majority is wrong, where do you stand?

III

Life confronts us with many decisions and with many conflicts. We can choose to take the easy way out, but, if we do, where does it lead us? Or we can choose to stand up for what we believe to be true and to stand up for our Master. Christ demands that we live for Him, that we speak for Him, and that we bear witness to Him. This will never be done when we deliberately choose the easy way out.

Christ never succumbed to the wishes of the crowd; He never yielded to the demands of the majority. To be sure, it led Him to the Cross, but the Cross was only a step toward newness of life. The message that Christ gave to His disciples following His resurrection was simple: "You are my witnesses!" This is the same message that He speaks to each of us. Take a close look at your life, and when the majority is wrong for whom do you witness?

Joshua was confronted with this very same decision. He was the new leader of the Hebrew peoples, and when the time came that leadership was urgently needed and when someone had to make a decision that would change the entire course of Hebrew history, this man called all the tribes of Israel together. He then made his immortal address describing the way that God had led Israel out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. But now they had turned away from God, and were worshipping idols. In forceful language Joshua proclaimed: "Now therefore, fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and in

aithfulness; put away the gods which our fathers served beyond the River nd in Egypt, and serve the Lord. nd if you be unwilling to serve the ord, choose this day whom you will erve . . . but as for me and my ouse, we will serve the Lord." This hoice is ours: shall we serve the oud cries of the crowd, shall we fol- w the masses, shall we conform o the wishes of an immoral society? Or shall we serve the quiet inner call f the Master? When the majority s wrong, where do you stand?

Robert Frost, in his poem, "The oad Not Taken," gives us this in- ight:

Two roads diverged in a wood,
and I —
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

aking that road has always been he most difficult, but, in the long un, the most rewarding. History has ot recorded decisions that are more oble than these. Socrates decided for ruth, and drank the hemlock; Jesus ecided for truth, and dared to stand efore Pilate and say: "You say that am a King. For this I was born, nd for this I have come into the orld, to bear witness to the truth." artin Luther, standing before Char- s V at the Diet of Worms, decided r truth, and had the courage of his onvictions to say, "Unless I am con- inced by Scripture and plain reason I do not accept the authority of opes and councils, for they have ontradicted each other — my con- cience is captive of the Word of God. cannot and I will not recant any- ing, for to go against conscience s neither right nor safe. God help e. Amen." It is because men like hese have dared to stand up in the ace of overwhelming odds, to take he road less traveled by, to speak out gainst the will and actions of the najority, the course of human history as been changed.

You may not be a Joshua or a Luther, but there is something that you can do which will change the world and community in which we live. Your decision to let the Spirit of the Master dominate your life and motivate your actions can change things. The way that you witness in the name of your Master can make this world a better place in which to live. Here is how one man changed the attitudes of many. Shortly after the close of the Civil War, a Negro entered a fashionable church in Richmond, one Sunday morning at the beginning of a communion service. When the time came, he walked down the aisle and knelt at the altar. A rustle of shock swept through the congregation. Then a distinguished layman immediately stood up, stepped forward to the altar and knelt beside his colored brother. Captured by his spirit, the congregation followed. The layman who set the example was none other than Robert E. Lee.

Not long ago in St. Louis, a Negro family bought a house in a residential section that had been a white residential area only. Immediately, "For Sale" signs were placed on the lawns and houses of many of the white people in that block. This went on for several days, until one of the neighbors placed a sign in front of his house which read, "This house is not for sale. We like our neighbors. Anyone is welcome to live on this block who is concerned with keeping up their property and working for the good of the community." In only a matter of hours many of the embarrassed neighbors realized how selfish they had been, and soon the "For Sale" signs began to disappear. This one family stood up for what they believed to be right and for what they thought was the truth of the Christian message, and because they had the courage to stand up and to speak out against the crowd and its wishes, others came to realize their own arrogant selfishness.

How is it with us? In the face of the easier wrong, dare we stand up

for the truth? Dare we stand up for Christ? How is it with your life? When the majority is wrong, where do you stand?

BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

from page 2

igion indicates in many ways the changes which have come about in the past fifteen years of continual challenge to individuals and nations. But the author's thoughts have deepened and sharpened during the interim, and a book which has long been important to those who work with people is now unparalleled in the field. The book deals with such important ideas as the psychological study of religion, contemporary psychologies of religion, religious experience and growth, conversion, prayer and worship, and religion and health. (Abingdon, 304 pp., $5)

Biblical Interpretation by E. C. Blackman concerns biblical exposition. The author discusses revelation and authority, the traditional and modern exegetical standards and methods, and offers illuminating and valuable suggestions for contemporary interpreters. (Westminster, 212 pp., $3)

A Theology of the Laity by Hendrik Kraemer is a plea for a more integrated participation of the layman in the life and work of the church. This participation must be premised on a sound and comprehensive theology of the laity. Toward such atheology the author offers a biblically-based and historically-slanted contribution. The laity-issue is presented as of tremendous practical relevance. The reading of this book will deepen the thought and broaden the perspective of any pastor. (Westminster, 192 pp., $3)

Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist, by Edgar J. Goodspeed is a spirited and reasonable defense of the apostolic authorship of the Gospel. But the book is more than a study of the claims for the Matthean authorship; it is a revealing and a glowing interpretation of both the Gospel and the milieu from which it came. (John C. Winston Co., 166 pp., $3.50)

JOHNSTONE G. PATRICK
JOHN R. BROKHOFF
AARON N. MECKEL

Eyes Toward The Cross

THE WINNOWING WIND

Johnstone G. Patrick, First Presbyterian Church, Sayre, Pennsylvania

Thou winnowest my path.
Psalm 139:3.

The winds blew.
Matthew 7:27.

"Thou compassest my path," declared the Psalmist, or, to adopt the marginal reading, "Thou winnowest my path." The picture conjured up before the mind's eye is that of a threshing-floor in an eastern land, on which the sheaves were laid in a circle and over which were driven rough and heavy sledges of wood, their under-surface stuck full of sharp bits of basalt. Sometimes a man stood on the threshing-sledge to make it heavier while another man drove the oxen that pulled it round and round until the sheaves were thoroughly threshed. When the grain had been separated from the straw, the mixed corn and broken straw was tossed up into the winnowing wind with a shovel. The grain, being heavier, dropped to the ground, while the light chaff was carried a little distance away, to be burned up later.

It was a mighty wind, blowing away much chaff, which blew upon the following of the Nazarene when the Leader was betrayed and taken prisoner. The enthusiastic crowd that had hailed His entry into Jerusalem vanished like dead leaves blown by some autumn gale. The brief, bright hour of exalted hope that had welcomed the "Son of David" over, disillusioned by the sequel to their palmy demonstration, the Messianic enthusiasts scatter and disappear from history. But the process of winnowing went further back. In the Upper Room there had foregathered with the doomed Master those who were destined to be His apostles. This little group was very different in character from the irresponsible throng that had paved the way into Jerusalem with palm branches. These men had experienced some three years' intensive training. The opposition to their Master, powerful though it was and backed by high authority, had thus far failed to detach them from Him. In the darkening shadows that overcast the Feast their faces could be seen, sad but hard-set. One of them, it is true, left the little company to carry out his sinister scheme of betrayal, but the rest, relieved of his uncomfortable presence, only drew closer around the Master of the Feast.

No doubt they recalled past occasions when He had delivered Himself from His encircling enemies. Surely something would happen, they believed, to avert the threatened blow to the faith that had been built up by solemn warnings and all-but incredible miracles. Yes, come what might, they would stand firm. But when nothing did happen and Jesus was led away captive, sacred by what they saw, "they all forsook Him, and fled." Only one in that intimate inner circle was to remain loyal to the end. A day of judgment, indeed! The winnowing wind, increasing to a hurricane, so fluttered the heart of even steadfast Peter that he disclaimed to a giggling girl that he had any knowl-

edge of the Prisoner.

Around the Cross on which He hangs the storm breaks with redoubled fury. All the diabolic forces of the underworld are unleashed upon Him "who went about doing good." This cyclone is the center of the conflict between God and evil. The current of "man's inhumanity to man" boils and seethes here as nowhere else in the long story of man. The very earth shudders and shivers with the shock of the struggle. The bravest heart, it might be imagined, would palpitate, counselling flight. But with all its terrors, the sinister scene has proved powerless to dislodge one faithful attendant upon the Crucified. At the foot of His Cross stands a wee wisp of womanhood, clinging with unshaken fidelity to her Son. Heartened by her fidelity, others join her.

It is worthwhile studying this small group. It differs almost completely from that which met in the Upper Room. A single individual is the only link between the two gatherings, and he, if we may put it so, is present rather in his capacity of friend than as one of the chosen twelve. This forlorn little minority standing at the storm-center of history has one common characteristic. It is that they are all united with the Crucified by the most intimate of personal ties. It is this and not any official status that has brought them together here.

I

There is little need to emphasize the intimate relationship in which each one stands to his or her Lord. In the case of Mary-the-mother-of-Jesus the need is least of all. In that word "mother" is summed up all we know of the sweetness, strength and purity of the most intimate of all human relationships. A mother can say things to her son which no one else dare say. She is the recipient of her son's secrets, the "confidante" of his unpublicized thoughts.

In spite of this close, personal relationship — or shall we rather say, because of it? — it is she who is found weathering the storm that broke over Calvary. That storm blew away all that was merely legal and official and coldly-calculating but the personal element persisted with beautiful perseverance.

Her love did follow Him to that high hill "outside the city wall."

We can afford a moment to watch her there. She takes her stand outside the ring of soldiery. She cannot yet draw near. The executioners hide Him from her view. But her senses are alert. She knows they are preparing to crucify Him — removing the clothes from His bleeding and battered body. Often had she dressed and undressed Him in infancy, but with what reverence and gentleness! They who strip Him now are rough and rude, without heart and without honor. Then she hears that dreaded sound — the hard ringing blows of the hammer. They are driving the nails through the delicate hands of her Son, the hands she had held so tenderly, kissed so reverently, clasped so lovingly. And the feet — how long it seems before His feet are fastened too. At last the blows cease; and in the new-born silence she catches His first words: "Father, forgive them. . ."

And now they are raising the cross; and presently she sees the form of her Son rise above the heads of the crowd, and hears the yells of triumph with which they greet their victim. Pity her! Her Son is dying and no one cares, no one loves Him. See how they toss their heads in derision! Hear how they howl at Him and cry: "If you are the Son of God, come down and save yourself!" But for their sakes—to save **them**—He stays.

Darkness creeps over Calvary, and fear over the crowd which thins and melts away; and the mother presses forward and stands at last close beside her Son. In an agony of grief she first looks up into His dear disfigured face and into those divine eyes that look down on hers with

iial recognition. He knew that she ›uld come; He wanted her to come wanted her to be the last divinely delicate touch in the picture that as meant to move the world to the ›rship of compassion. Then her gaze avels slowly and sadly over His hole form from head to foot, and e realizes what men have done to im, her Son, their God. There are vo great nails through His tender nds, two more through His swollen et. He is hanging there by four liv- g wounds. Upon His head—a crown thorns, His eyes bloodshot with ain, His face and form marred and angled, battered, bleeding and oken. Now, too, she sees that they ave scourged Him — scourged Him cruelly that the flesh is hanging tatters from His shoulders, back nd sides. "There is no beauty in Him ›w, nor comeliness." She does not eak. What could she say to mfort Him? She cannot reach wipe the blood from His eyes; e cannot bath His brow or moist- n His lips or ease His pain-wrack- d body; she cannot touch Him ithout adding to His pain. He cries oud, "My God, My God, why hast hou forsaken Me?" The mother un- rstands that, deep and wide as is r love and sympathy, it is all too ttle to fill the huge aching void in is heart. So in silence she watches e shadow of death creep over Him, atches the body pale and droop, atches the lips that are moving in ayer — and the eyes that keep turn- g toward her and turning away gain with a look of increased suffer- g. Once only does He speak to her to tell her that John will take her me and cherish her when He Him- lf is gone. What a strangely-beauti- l feeling comes over her when she ears Him mention that word "home." hen — "It is finished" — and bowing is head, He gives up His spirit. Now er Jesus is beyond the reach of pain. "The winds blew. . ." But when the innowing was over, we still find is mother there. "There stood by the Cross of Jesus, His mother." She waits on because all that she loves best in Heaven or on earth is hanging there

II

When we come to John we find the same sort of relationship. As presented in the New Testament his role of apostle is less obvious than that of friend. The Gospel generally attributed to John, though it reports the Lord's public activities, is characterized by accounts of a unique series of private interviews. The writer's chief interest seems to lie in these. His reading of the precious past places some of the Master's choicest sayings in such talks with individuals — the woman sitting on the coping-stone of the Sychar Well, Nicodemus, and Mary and Martha. And it is to be observed that while he omits to mention the actual institution of the Lord's Supper he gives us, in place of this, a discourse wherein Jesus drew closer to His few forlorn friends than on any other occasion. As the recorder of Jesus' "table-talk" at His secret session in the Upper Room, John is in his element. This is the sphere in which he moves most surely. It is that realm which belongs to him — in a special way, to him who is distinguished as "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

"Every one that loveth knoweth God" was one of the great discoveries made by this disciple. "Perfect love casteth out fear" is another of the great discoveries made and proclaimed by this disciple. He made it, I believe, somewhere between the Garden of Gethsemane and Golgotha. It is true that, for one moment, in the Garden of Gethsemane, he quailed and fled with the other disciples. Robert Browning describes this incident in his poem "A Death in the Desert":

> The torchlight and the noise,
> The sudden Roman faces, violent hands,
> And fear of what the Jews might do! Just that:

And it is written, 'I forsook and fled:'
That was my trail, and it ended thus.

But, actually, it did not end thus. He recovered. Love cast our fear. He was in the courtyard of the high priest during the trumped-up trial of Jesus and he was present at the Cross, when the winnowing wind blew. The only disciple so far as we know who dared to be present was John who loved because he had been so greatly loved.

Surely, out of the savings of his prospering Nazareth craftsmanship, Jesus had met what had covered the cost of home and home-comforts for His mother through the three years of His public ministry. But now on the Cross, though speech was almost impossible to His dry and swollen tongue, He contrived to signify His wish that she and John should accept the care of each other for His sake. Having thus feathered His mother's nest and having called His deepest-souled disciple to a sacred trust, He was ready to go. John stayed to see Him leave. "The winds blew and beat upon the house; and it fell not: for it was founded on a rock." "Love never fails."

III

Besides two other women, there remains Mary of Magdala, the woman "who was a sinner." In the house of Simon the Pharisee, Jesus agreed with His host when He encountered her for the first time. Curiously enough, however, the host and the Guest parted at the very point on which they agreed, because the Saviour saw that she was more than a sinner. There was an imprisoned splendour within her struggling to be free, a saint striving to stifle life-destroying sins on the very eve of a splendid victory.

"Her sins which are many are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." The parable of the Two Debtors, spoken by Jesus in answer to the criticism of Simon, makes it patent that her love was the proof of her forgiveness and the consequence of it. She loved because she had been greatly loved; she believed in Christ because He had so mightily believed in her.

The love of Mary Magdalene for Jesus was made quick and quivering that day in Simon's house, and it outlasted death. It was this woman who was the first to be greeted in the garden of His triumph by the Risen Christ. As she met the look of Jesus in Simon's house that day, she saw what her life had missed and what her life might have been if she had met Him before she sinned. But He who looked on her gave to her the revelation of the Lord and Lover of her soul, and her soul rose from its charnel-house to greet the Lord of its life, and Lazarus rose from his tomb. She rose out of her old life which was really a living death, to follow Him to that death which was the perfect fulfillment of life, the perfect sacrifice of love. No poor girl can ever be without hope, as she turns her thoughts to Mary Magdalene, a queen among penitents, who rose from the depths to which her seven devils drew her to share with Mary-the-mother and "the disciple whom Jesus loved" their vigil by the Cross.

There we have three individuals whom the winnowing of the mighty wind left staunchly loyal to the Crucified. No public shame or personal danger could alienate them. The more cruel was the treatment He received, the more need He had of them and the readier they were to outbrave the derision and fierce hatred that marked the end of His life in the flesh.

IV

May we not assert that this is typical of what happens in every crisis? The Church goes her way advancing, like her Lord, toward crises that are like winnowing winds, and, when the storm breaks, it is seen that a judg-

ent has been passed.

The Church of Christ encounters any storms. Jesus warns us of this, m the world ye shall have tribula- on." Grave dangers now threaten, ot only from the avowed enemies the Church, but even from some ho profess to be her friends. So btle is the corrupting influence of r materialistic age that none of us n consider himself secure against s power. Strong winds of opposition the claim of Christ to supremacy all the spheres of human activity e at the present time blowing very rd. Some are pessimistic enough dread that not only our Christian- but our civilization will become amped in that tide of opposition. t this is not warranted. All this position will not hinder the Christ- n Church reaching its goal of see- g a Kingdom of God established erywhere. Jesus will use this op- sition as He did the storm on the ke of Galilee and on the Hill of Golgotha to reveal His mighty power at His appointed time. It was this thought that moved William Cowper, "the stricken deer" as he styled himself, to write the familiar lines:

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps on the sea
And rides upon the storm.

It is becoming more and more evident, however, that compliance with outward observances — necessary as such compliance is — will prove insufficient when the winds blow and the rains descend and the floods rise. More — very much more — than a mere nodding acquaintance with Jesus is needed. In that day, as on the first Good Friday, only those will stand steadfast in the teeth of trial who love greatly because they have been loved greatly, those whose relationship with their Lord and Master is personal, vital, and spiritual.

HE CROSS — ROOTED IN ETERNITY

J. R. Brokhoff, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Charlotte, N. C.

But all this has taken place, that thee scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Matthew 26:56

Before and after the erection of e cross on Calvary in 30 A.D., the oss of Christ has been "towering r the wrecks of time." The cross as no accident. God had planned from the "foundations of the rld." It has been ages in prepara- n. The preparations began with ernity, because God knew that man uld yield to temptation and would ed redemption from sin. For this ason He chose a special people, the ebrews, to receive His special reve- tion and to prepare them for receiv- g the Messiah. The Prophets fore- ld the coming of a Redeemer. Jesus imself understood His death as the lmination of a process begun in ernity. At the time of His arrest, He fused to call down legions of angels defend Him, because He said, "All this is come to pass that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."

I

In the Old Testament there are types of redemption, prototypes of the cross. In its pages we find foreshadowings and promises of the cross. One of those is Abraham's test of faith by sacrificing his son, Isaac. One of the most dramatic stories of the Bible is Abraham's sacrifice of his only true son. When Abraham was 100 years old and his wife was beyond the age of child bearing, God gave them a son, their only child. Having this child was a miracle. He brought tremendous happiness to the household. The hope of Abraham's future was upon him. Isaac was the apple of his eyes.

One day Abraham receives a most

disturbing and astonishing command. He is to take this dear son to the top of a mountain and there offer him as a burnt sacrifice. Abraham never had a test of faith like that. Leaving his home and country for a strange land was nothing compared to this! Finally Abraham pulls himself together and decides to carry out the command. Servants carry the supplies for the sacrifice to a certain point. Then Isaac is given the wood, and the father and son trudge up the remaining part of the mountain. His feet are like lead. We can see him drag his feet reluctantly, ever hoping to delay the terrible deed. Each step is a sword's thrust in his heart. As they climbed, Isaac innocently asks, "Father, where is the sacrifice?" This must almost have caused Abraham to break down, but with super-human power he continues and answers better than he knows, "God will provide the sacrifice." They reach the top. The altar is built. Isaac's hands and feet are tied. The fire is ready. As the boy helplessly lies on the altar, he must be frightened. He must be disillusioned. He perhaps cries, "Father, father, why are you doing this to me? Please have mercy upon me. I thought you loved me. How can you do this to me?" Now comes the final terrible act. Abraham reaches for the knife to cut his son's throat. As he reaches for it, his arm and hand are trembling with fear and tension. As the hand is ready to plunge the knife, God's voice is heard. He is told not to harm his son, for his faith had been proven. At the same time Abraham notices a ram with horns caught in a thicket. He takes his knife, releases the ram, and slays it for sacrifice in place of Isaac. God had provided the sacrifice.

Here we see the remarkable love of Abraham for God. It was greater than his love for his only son. We dare not minimize Abraham's love for Isaac. He was as loving as any one of us would be if we had only one child. Could you kill your son if God asked you to do it? I, for one, am afraid I could not do it.

This event was a foreshadowing of God's love for His children. God loved us so much that He permitted His only Son to die on the cross for us. God did not love His Son any less than Abraham did nor any less than we love our children. Here is the marvel of the cross! God gave His dear Son as a sacrifice for sinners.

As in the case of Abraham, God provided the sacrifice. We are the ones who are on the altar to die for our sins. We deserve it. But God permits us to rise up in life and freedom and in place of us gives His Son to die for us. Jesus was the sheep provided. That is why we exclaim about Jesus, "Behold, the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." He is our substitute. Does this not once and for all prove that God does not desire the death of a sinner, no matter how evil he is? He wants all men to live and to be saved for eternity. That is why the cross has been in preparation for ages.

II

The Old Testament gives us a second foreshadowing of the cross. God was preparing for the cross through Moses. When the Israelites were in the wilderness, they were rebellious and complaining. Because of their disobedience, God sent poisonous snakes to torment them. The people were dying from the bites. They went to Moses with a protest and an appeal for help. Moses, as always, takes his troubles to God. God tells him to raise a standard of a brazen serpent and to tell the people to look at it when bitten. Healing would come in looking at the standard. And it did.

Jesus refers to this in John's gospel. He said that as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whoever believed might not perish. It is interesting to note that the standard raised by Moses was a Tau cross. "Tau" is the Greek word for the letter "T." The standard was in the form of a "T." This is the oldest cross

own commonly as the Old Tes-ment cross. It was the sign placed the doorposts at the time of the st passover when the Israelites re freed from the bondage of ypt. The two thieves crucified with sus were hung on Tau crosses.

As Moses lifted up a cross and in at cross his followers received heal-g, so today men find healing and ength in the uplifted cross of Jesus. e by our disobedience and rebelli-sness are infected with a poisonous sease. We too will die unless we t relief. Salvation for us, too, is in ook. Only in a look! There is noth-g we can do to merit acceptance God. The Israelites were not told cut open their bites, suck out the isonous blood, and put on a salve heal it. They should be content th a look at the brazen serpent. We n do nothing to heal our sinful unds. Salvation is of God. It is work of God on the cross. All we ed is faith and trust.

This sounds so easy. In fact, it is o easy for some to accept. They nt to do something about healing mselves spiritually. They cannot lieve that we are saved by faith ne. They must accumulate merit prayers, good works, and masses. is appeals to our pride and self-fficiency. But the evangelical gos-l is that God alone saves us through r humble faith. Want to be saved? en simply look to and at the cross Christ!

III

The popular and humorous story of nah and the whale surprisingly is hird forecasting of the cross. Jesus mself referred to it as a type of re-mption. When His enemies de-nded a sign, He answered that e only sign that would be given t He was God's true Son was "the n of Jonah."

You recall, don't you, how Jonah s asked to preach to the Ninevites, t refused because he did not want d to have mercy upon them? He k a ship to Tarshish. On the way a storm developed and he was thrown overboard by his fellow-passengers. A great fish swallowed him. For three days and nights he was in the stomach of the fish. He was down in the depths. All was dark and dead. Then Jonah came to himself, realized his mistake, and repented. Because of this new attitude, God puts Jonah ashore and he goes to Ninevah.

This story points to the death and resurrection of Jesus. That is why Jesus referred to it as "the sign of Jonah." In history, some men have not been able to accept either Jesus' death or resurrection. Some believed Jesus was all God, and therefore as God could not die. They deny His death. But if Jesus did not die, He did not rise again. On the other hand, there are those who doubted that Jesus ever rose from the grave. Jesus did not rise, then naturally, He is dead. But this goes against personal experience with a living Christ today.

There is a lesson in this for us today. Like Jonah we must die to rise again. If a seed does not die and is not buried, it remains alone, but if it is buried in the soil, it rises again in newness of life. That is a principle of all life. We cannot be new people unless first we die as old people. We cannot have new life, hope, and power in Christ unless we first die unto self and sin.

IV

The suffering of the cross is foretold by Isaiah in his Fifty-third chapter. He gives a perfect description of the agony on the cross 500 years before it takes place. Here again we see God's preparations for the cross of Jesus. In that Fifty-third chapter of Isaiah we see the Messiah as a despised and unattractive man, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, one who is beaten and forsaken.

Jesus fulfilled this portrayal of the Suffering Messiah. He was all that Isaiah said He would be, and more. He did suffer the pain of body. He was slapped on the face and beaten

with a whip on the back; He was given a crown of thorns that caused His blood to trickle over His face. With a reed as a scepter and with a dirty, worn-out coat for a king's cloak, Pilate presents Jesus to the mob with the exclamation, "Behold the man!" Who would want this sorry spectacle of a man?

As Isaiah prophesied, Jesus endured also the agony of spirit. He was rejected and despised by His own countrymen. His closest friends forsook Him. His own religious leaders mocked and taunted Him while He helplessly hung on the cross. And yet He loved each one so much. That is what caused the mental agony. It would have been easy if He could have hated them and thrown curses at them. No wonder that a Roman soldier found water in His heart. He died of a broken heart.

What was the meaning of all this suffering described by Isaiah and actualized by Jesus? Isaiah saw that redemption comes only through suffering. Good does come from suffering. It is the only way lasting good comes. There was no other Way to take away sin. There was no other good enough except Jesus to do the suffering for man.

Our suffering need not be in vain. We often wonder about the good of our trouble and trials. We often confront the unanswerable "whys" of life. It is a comfort to know that our suffering, like Jesus,' can be a blessing to others as well as to ourselves. Some good eventually will come out of it. This knowledge helps us patiently to bear our crosses from day to day.

If God took ages to work out our redemption, dare we pass it up so lightly? If there is salvation in the cross, can we neglect it and pass by as though it meant nothing? If the cross is rooted in eternity that souls might be secure for eternity, should we not be concerned about bringing others as well as ourselves to the cross? With the cross rooted in eternity, ever standing before us on the horizon of our lives, the best thing we can do is to accept it, embrace its benefits, surrender to its love, and even glory in it.

THE WISDOM OF THE CROSS

Aaron N. Meckel, First Congregational Church, St. Petersburg, Florida

The wisdom of the Cross. I Corinthians 1:23-24.

Occasionally one meets the person who is utterly impatient with this message of the Cross. "In Heaven's name!" protests such a one, "why don't you preachers get away from the gory gloominess of crosses, crucifixions, and sacrifices! There is enough of gloom and terror in the world as it is!" And this person seems almost to suspicion one of a sadist complex.

Most of you will, I trust, have the reply to this impatient expression close at hand. This generation which despises crosses as being "bloody" is all too prone to flee the grim realities of life, rather than to face them. We shall not cure the terrible ills of our corporate or individual life by spraying rose-water on them, no matter how delicious its scent! It's the Cross and only the Cross which gets tucked down under our deepest needs and heals them. That Cross is not a trinket but a power and a reality. God's infinite wisdom is revealed in the Cross of Christ. "Christ only succeeded once in public, and that was when H was crucified," insisted old Ian MacClaren. Then together let us look at the Cross of our Redeemer and learn of its precious wisdom.

I

Look at the Cross and behold what

od Himself is like. We preach rist crucified for therein is reveal- the wisdom of God. Therein! ristianity is not a pretty legend uriously woven about a mystic sym- l, elegantly written up and to be morously chanted in Church. No! s the business of a great religion to me to grips with all of life, to offer enlightening interpretation of it, d an adequate dynamic for the liv- g of it. The Cross somehow does st that. It lets us in on the heart God. When we look to Moses and e Ten Commandments we learn of e stern justice of God. His universe law-abiding. But now look off from ount Sinai to Mount Calvary and e know that God is far more than w and justice. He is love and mercy o. There is a remarkable painting an old art gallery in Europe of the rucifixion. First one is aware only that "Strange Man upon the Cross." t remain there a while in worship d adoration and a dim Figure rises the background. Just behind the n there is the Father. And the ils are driven into His hands and rough His feet and into His Heart. nd we come to know that "the All- owing is the All-Loving, too." The ross on Calvary becomes a window rough which we can look into the eart of God!

II

Moreover, in the Cross of Christ revealed the tragic nature of man's worthiness and the cost of our demption to God from that un- orthiness. It's the Divine Wisdom the Cross that somehow cleanses s of the bad while it wondrously leases the good in us.

Though the Cross of His Son, God minds us that this is a universe hich is moral at the heart of it! The tinue of horrid sins which put hrist to death is alive and rampant the world today. The crucifixion kes place on main street every day. he same greediness inheres in the lfish organization of our economic fe. The hatred and fiendish brutality massacres innocent people from the air in war. The uncharitableness and lovelessness crouches at the heart of our schismatic Christianity Judas who went truant and betrayed Him! Peter who turned coward and denied Him! Caiaphas who in his priestly pride allowed the mercenaries to spit on Him and mistreat Him! Pilate who played politics and allowed them to take Him away against his own better judgment! They are all here — these sins and these who commit them — and may be found to some degree in every agglomeration of folk.

"Were you there when they crucified my Lord? When He never said a mumbling word?" There is something in the Cross that condemns the hollowness and hyprocrisy in my life! Condemns it — and thank God, removes it! How graphically Bunyan portrays that removal in his **Pilgrim's Progress.** It's when Pilgrim, weary and heavy-laden, climbs a steep ascent called Calvary that he comes in sight of a wooden Cross. And as he in faith fixes his eyes and heart on that Cross, that heavy burden of defeat and sin drops from his back. And Pilgrim pursues his journey to the Celestial City as an unfettered man.

III

Kneel reverently at the foot of the Cross and learn the Divine Art of forgiving others even as God in the Crucified Christ forgives you! Don't ever take your eyes from the Cross when you repeat those sacred words, "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," lest they become hollow mockery. It's right at this point — the Achille's tendon in the armor of the average Christian — that this grim, gaunt Symbol stalks forward to crucify the accumulated resentments and putrifying hatreds that chide the godliness in hearts otherwise free. "Lord, how often shall I forgive my brother? Seven times?" Peter congratulates himself on his Christian liberality. "Not seven, but

seventy times seven times!" replies His Lord, and Peter hangs his head in shame. Ah, yes! Just try it out yourself, not seventy times, only once. Try to forgive the person who slandered your own good name. The one who let you down at the last, leaving an awful resentment in your heart that seems to blot out any sign of reconciliation. The one who stole the happiness you had planned for your life, leaving you standing like a lonely, stripped tree against the sky. You'll find, if you really try it out, that this business of forgiving others isn't to be done through human strength alone. It takes the bleeding power and wisdom of that gaunt Cross standing in the midst of the other two at Calvary!

A young Turk in a war hospital marvelled at the kindness and courtesy of an Armenian nurse who attended him. One day he dared ask her concerning the light on her face. She told him the story of a day when members of his own race came to her home in Armenia, wrapped carpets about her father and brothers, threw them on trucks and, taking them to the edge of the city, put them to death. At this point a startled look came into the face of that Turk. "I was the one who ran a bayonet through your father!" he said, and with head sunk on his breast, he dared not to think of asking her forgiveness. The heart of that Armenian nurse cringed with a feeling of desire for revenge. Just a bit of poison in a bit of broth, and the score would be even. But then, being a Christian, that nurse saw a mental picture of a Man bearing a great Cross to a lonely Hill. There He hung with a Crown of thorns pricking his forehead and nails through hands and feet. And a Voice lifted itself above that scene of hatred and cruelty to say, "Father, forgive, forgive! They know not what they do!" And that Christian girl, that Armenian turned to her father's assassin and said: "In the name and for the sake of the Crucified, I forgive you!" I need not tell you that that Turk became a Christian. And to think that we hesitate to forgive our lesser injuries! The shame of the Cross be upon us if we do!

IV

Finally, there is a Divine Wisdom in the Cross which teaches us how to bear the many losses and sorrows of life, vicariously! I stopped by the bedside of a disparaged person in one of our big lonely city hospitals the other day. Not sickness but disappointment was crushing out that heart. "Are you giving up the fight?" I asked. And I told that person of the Cross, and color seemed to return to that haggard face. We hear a lot about what life does to us. But the Cross teaches us WHAT — with the help of the Crucified — we can do to life. Just as there is a power in the Cross that can sublimate the rawest passions into the finest Christian graces, so that same power can sanctify the ills of life until it is the greatest sufferers whom we know to be the most Christ-like characters. A woman denied the blessing of children, but cares for the children of others, or works in social settlement work! A stinted, crippled body, yes, but a mind and heart so alert, that Niagara wonders are seen through the plainest of invalid's windows. Life sends every one of us, sooner or later, through the same door with its losses and crosses. We may refuse and rebel against our allotment and have our hearts turned into the bitter gall of the cynic. Or in the spirit of Him who was made "perfect through suffering" we may accept our share of life's ills, thank God for our share in His redemptive program, and become Christ-like.

There was a man who had often heard his minister preach about the Cross. He thought it to be sound doctrine — no more. One day death stalked into his home and took away his only son. Straightway that father bestrode the study of his pastor, took his minister almost gruffly by the arm,

d asked, "Where was God when y Son died?" But that pastor had arned the art of comfort through any summers and winters. So he ced deep eyes on his grief-stricken rishioner and softly said, "Just here He was when his own son died. here in the great calm of Calvary, at man learned a lesson so many ve learned: How to handle vicariously the losses and sorrows of life.

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
By the Cross are sanctified.
Peace is there that knows no measure,
Joy that through all time abides.

And to know that joy and that peace is to know the Wisdom of the Cross.

ORTH QUOTING

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ck of background and equipment skills, knowledge, ideals, beliefs, als, which may be shared with each her. In other words, just not having what it takes. (4) Shallowness of aracter and religious resources ich often causes a failure to proce such things as understanding, selfishness, loyalty, genuine affecn, and warmth of personality.

James R. Hine

* * *

Wisdom and genius must have eir martyrs as well as religion, and th the same results, namely, the od of the martyrs is the seed of e church. Genius did not save Mil- from poverty, nor Tasso from e madhouse, nor Galileo from the quisition; they were the sufferers, t posterity the gainers.

Lord Lytton

* * *

It takes a pretty well-educated man hide his education.

* * *

The place of greatest need is the ace for the church.

George McCleave

* * *

A closed mind is usually found bend an open mouth.

Marcelene Cox

* * *

He who shall introduce into public fairs the principles of primitive hristianity will revolutionize the orld. Benjamin Franklin

* * *

Ruts can lead toward efficiency as ell as enjoyment. Experience remains the best teacher. Doing the same thing in the same way saves us time and energy.

An old man once complained that the trouble with life is that it's so daily. There's something to that. And yet, one of the most frequently repeated petitions of all time is "Give us this day our daily bread." There's something good and satisfying about daily bread. And there's something to be said for routine. If we've built up a helpful program for our daily lives — as we surely have by the time we're 50—there's no point in changing. If we've always put on our right shoe first, why change to the left? If we've loved one wife or one husband through the years, why change?

That doesn't mean that we should be adamant to progress or that there should be no room for improvement. If it's obvious that there's a better way than our own, it would be foolish to refuse to change. If we don't like doing dishes in the traditional way, we should, by all means, invest in a dish washer. If we're tired of wearing blue, why not try another color for a while?

But there's no point in changing merely for the sake of a change.

Annie Laurie Von Tungeln in **The Rotarian**

* * *

There is no self-supported church on the face of the earth. We are members of each other. We are all involved. The circulation is better in one body. Mission work is no one way street. Paul Newton Poling

Until the Church claims people, they are still underprivileged, even in the midst of plenty.

David Proffitt

* * *

The Church is not a refuge into which we flee to escape from the responsibilities of everyday life but a fortress from which we go forth to meet thet world. Ernest Gordon

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There is a time to look at what is overwhelmingly great and a time to have concern for what is small, insignificant and remote . . . Mission is revealed not in any dogmatic affirmation, but in what it does to proclaim the gospel and to heal the hurts of men. It's object is not to establish "the secure society of the saved," but the "adventurous society of the saving." Hermann N. Morse

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The mission of the Church has a sense of destiny rather than a sense of danger. Charles T. Leber

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In times of trouble, a friend is one who comes in when others have departed. A Christian friend is one who is there all the time.

Francisco Garcia

* * *

Our faith must be a maturing one. We must be geared to the problems of the hour, using the timeless and timely Gospel. Let it not be said of us that we permit evil in the shadow of the church.

Ours is a mission of reconciliation. The doctrine of love is not enough. We must pursue this purpose until all injustices are eliminated. What we Christians have to offer our world is the Jesus of Nazareth, the Word that became flesh and dwells among us. Books Hays

* * *

Years ago, I thought old age would be dreadful, because I should not be able to do the things I would want to do. Now, I find there is nothing I want to do after all.

Lady Astor, at age of 80

God and man produce the Bible jointly. They are not simplyy co-authors, each doing a part of the work. Nor does God dictate the whole of it to a human stenographer. God moves the author to write and influences him in every phase of the activity needed to produce the finished work. Since the product is God's as well as man's, what the human author teaches, God teaches. That is why the Bible cannot teach error. It is protected by God's veracity.

The human author, however, is a special kind of instrument, a fact only now being appreciated. He is a child of his age, reflecting the mentality, environment, and characteristics of a culture and time far removed from ours. When he comes to write, he has the prejudices and inclinations of his contemporaries. His grasp of physics, anthropology, ancient history, etc. is no better than theirs. In other words, God, in using him as an instrument, uses him as he is. This means the inspired writer expresses himself in the manner of his contemporaries.

One can easily see the problem facing biblical theologians. If the human author often shares the mistaken notions of his neighbors, how does one know when biblical inerrancy is at stake? . . . To determine the teaching of a truth in the Bible, a teaching which woud engage God's veracity, one must discover: (1) from what point of view the author is treating his subject; (2) the degree of affirmation which he adopts in proposing it; (3) the extent to which he expects the reader to assent to his thought. Here enters the distinction between the inspired writer as a private person and as a public author. Of this, Pere Benoit says, "This distinction between the private person of an author and his public personality of 'author' is particularly important in the case of the sacred writer, because it is under the second aspect alone, and not under the first, that he is inspired."

Neil J. McEleney